1942

Eyes for Service!

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Twenty-eighth Annual Report
of the
National Society for the Prevention of Blindness

1942

National Society for the
Prevention of Blindness, Inc.
1790 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

Eyes and the War

"The National Society for the Prevention of Blindness is to be praised for its work in helping to conserve the vision of American citizens. It would be difficult to say how many persons have been directly or indirectly benefitted by the Society's work, but a review of the organization's program would convince one they must be legion. . . .

"Americans can do themselves and their nation a service by contributing to the treasury of a society which has done so much to conserve the eyesight of many who are today taking part in our war effort."

—*The Brooklyn (N. Y.) Citizen*

Eyes for Service!

THERE are in the United States approximately 200,000 blind persons and many times that number who suffer from seriously defective vision. In times of war or peace, the loss of sight is a tragedy which touches the hearts of all; and the fact that such tragedies are mostly needless emphasizes the significance of the work of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness.

Continued mobilization of the nation's manpower for combat duty, industrial production, and agriculture, reminds us also of the economic and social loss in needless blindness. Typical of the ways in which the Society's program helps to protect eyes in wartime are the drive to achieve visual efficiency in industry in order to speed up production, minimize spoilage and avoid accidents, and the educational campaign which seeks early diagnosis and treatment for glaucoma—an eye disease that threatens people as they grow older and is seriously aggravated by blackouts, shock, anxiety or similar conditions.

The National Society for the Prevention of Blindness links together the many forces enlisted in the movement to conserve vision—voluntary organizations, governmental agencies, and individuals in all parts of the country. This report is presented with appreciative acknowledgment of all these collaborators, and with an expression of gratitude to the 23,800 members and donors whose financial contributions furnish the weapons in our struggle to keep eyes fit for service.

Mason H. Bigelow

President

Eyes for Service—A Digest of a Year's Activities

THIS digest of the work carried on by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness during 1942, being necessarily brief, merely indicates the scope of the Society's program and emphasizes those aspects most closely related to current situations. Naturally, the special problems which the war brought to the fore during the past year received priority in the Society's plans; but the need was recognized also for carrying on those phases of the program concerned with everyday living. Eye care for the civilian population is as much a responsibility as ever, especially since many medical, nursing, and other facilities for civilians have been curtailed.

Services to Industry

Expansion of industry, increased employment of women and older men, and steady acceleration in the production of war materials have placed a heavy burden on eyes. To meet the challenge of these new conditions, the Society has intensified its industrial program; and the services of a consulting engineer have been added, to implement the help from the Industrial Advisory Committee.

Eye efficiency is of utmost importance in the war effort, aiding in both the speed-up of production and the prevention of accidents. The Society's study*—a sampling of safety procedures in fifty selected industries—disclosed that while other safety measures are satisfactory, eye protection is inadequate. To remedy this situation, the Society seeks to work with industrial executives, safety engineers, and others in establishing eye safety standards. Recommendations have been formulated which, if followed, can not only increase efficiency and safety, but will make greater manpower available through correction of defective vision among workmen who are otherwise able-bodied.

To arouse the interest of executives and plant managers in the subject of industrial eyesight—and to give them practical suggestions concerning such matters as pre-employment eye examinations, job analyses, accident hazards, plant illumination, etc.

* Published in the December, 1942, *Sight-Saving Review.*

—the Society prepared an extensive memorandum* which has been widely distributed. Large quantities were purchased at cost by leading corporations and various governmental agencies charged with the responsibility of increasing manpower, in addition to the numerous requests for this guide which have been received from small plants, local prevention of blindness organizations, and individuals.

The Society participated as usual in the meetings of the National Safety Council and the Greater New York Safety Council. More than 10,000 leaders in the safety movement attended these meetings at which the Society maintained exhibit booths for conferences with those interested in protection of eyesight. In addition to working with safety organizations and individual engineers, the Society is seeking to enlist the active collaboration of industrial physicians and nurses. Typical of such co-operation is the provision by the Society of a chapter on eye health and safety to appear in a manual for industrial nurses, to be published by the National Organization for Public Health Nursing. Literature on industrial hazards has been distributed generously, and the talking slide film on this subject, entitled "The Eyes Have It," has reached more than a million workers. Safety engineers are clamoring for additional visual education material.

On invitation of the International Labour Office, a report on "Industrial Eyesight in War—in Peace," was prepared, and published in the *Industrial Safety Survey*, thereby receiving worldwide circulation.

Services in Glaucoma Control

Glaucoma is an eye disease which can become intensified in wartime because it is a condition upon which the emotions have a very direct effect. Unfortunately, with the demands of the armed forces for medical men, fewer are left to handle the increased number of patients. The Society has emphasized, in writing, in conference, and through the press and radio, the value of early medical care and control measures; and wartime rules for glaucoma patients have been publicized. Magazine articles calling attention to the problem and to latest developments have been published in journals for ophthalmologists and general prac-

* "Eyesight in Industry—A Note to Industrial Executives," Publication 373, published by the Society.

titioners. Exhibits pointing out how the general practitioner can recognize early glaucoma and call it to the attention of the ophthalmologist were displayed under the auspices of the Society at meetings of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, the American Medical Association, and a number of state medical societies.

Progress can be reported on a demonstration glaucoma project in New York City, sponsored by the Society's Committee on Glaucoma. Volunteers to act as technical and clerical assistants have been trained in a course of 18 lectures given by a number of co-operating ophthalmologists. The six women volunteers, working in five eye clinics, are freeing the overburdened doctors from some of the details involved in eye examinations. The Society expects from the findings of this study to be able to formulate recommendations for a nation-wide glaucoma control program. During the limited period of this demonstration project (about three months), the volunteers assisted with the examination of approximately 50 patients, who kept 146 appointments between September 23 and December 31. So successful was the plan for the first six volunteers, that a new group will be trained.

The Society established last year, on a temporary basis, an experimental checking station for original Schiötz tonometers (a delicate instrument essential to the diagnosis of glaucoma) as a service to ophthalmologists in the United States. The chairman of the Committee on Glaucoma has been directing this service, and a staff member was trained to carry out checking procedures. The importance of this work is sharply revealed by the fact that, of 41 tonometers checked, only two were found to be accurate; 21 needed minor adjustments, 13 needed major adjustments, and five were in such poor condition that it was impossible to check them. A report was sent to each doctor submitting his tonometer.

A contribution of $250 has been presented to the Society by a donor who wishes to be anonymous, to be offered as a prize for a paper presenting the most valuable original material adding to existing knowledge about diagnosis of early glaucoma.

Latin American Relationships

In keeping with the "good neighbor policy" and the greater attention that is being directed towards our sister republics to

the south, the Society's annual meeting in New York City, December 3, was devoted to the Inter-American Aspects of Prevention of Blindness. The principal speaker was Dr. Moacyr E. Alvaro, of Sao Paulo, Brazil, Secretary General of the Brazilian National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness.* Other speakers were Dr. William F. Snow, General Director of the American Social Hygiene Association, and Dr. Albert Dreisbach, who represented the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

In connection with the meeting, an exhibit of sight conservation material from representative Latin and North American countries was displayed. Argentina was represented by a particularly impressive collection of striking posters on trachoma control, prevention of ophthalmia neonatorum, eye hazards during fiestas, industrial eye problems, and school eye hygiene. This exhibit was provided by the Patronato Nacional de Ciegos, under the sponsorship of the Argentine Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction. Among the other countries that sent delegates, exhibits or greetings to the meeting were Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Newfoundland, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

During Dr. Alvaro's visit, arrangements were made for him to broadcast to Brazil over the short wave facilities of the National Broadcasting Company. He was interviewed on the subject of sight conservation by Mason H. Bigelow, the Society's President, who asked questions in English which were translated and then answered in Portuguese by Dr. Alvaro.

Other Latin American developments included plans for a motion picture on conservation of vision, in Spanish and Portuguese, under the joint sponsorship of the Society and the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. This sound film, called "Eyes for the Future," to be made simultaneously with an English version, will be available in 1943.

Services to Communities

An important feature of the Society's program is advisory service to state organizations in planning programs for prevention

* "Latin American Developments in the Prevention of Blindness," December, 1942, *Sight-Saving Review.*

of blindness, making recommendations, selecting personnel, and planning studies. Among the communities receiving aid of this nature during 1942 were: Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and a number of Latin American countries.

The Society's published report, "Mobilization of State Forces for Prevention of Blindness," which included a summary of state laws relating to every phase of the sight conservation program, was used extensively by official and voluntary state agencies, as well as by leaders in the field, seeking legislative authorizations for new activities.

Co-operating with the State and Provincial Health Authorities of North America, the Society issued warning statements and pertinent memoranda relating to the recent outbreaks of epidemic keratoconjunctivitis, especially in industrial areas. This condition is an eye infection lasting several weeks, which has incapacitated workers in a number of war-production areas.

The greatly expanded program of the American Red Cross utilized the facilities of the Society in the Home Nursing courses conducted throughout the country. So great was the demand for the Society's collection of eye information, that the supply was exhausted, and plans were made to have a special bulletin prepared expressly for use in Home Nursing courses. This bulletin will be available early in 1943.

Rehabilitation of men injured in the war as well as in industry is a problem of great concern to the Government at this time, and the Society participated in several conferences dealing with this problem during the past year. Though a general program of rehabilitation for these groups is still in the beginning, it is apparent that this social problem is one in which the national voluntary health and welfare agencies will be called to play their part. Material has already been provided by the Society.

Public Education Services

The Society's educational program followed the same pattern as its other activities during the past year—a strong emphasis on the relationship of eye health and safety to war conditions.

Advice to the public about eye care has been released through the press and radio, as well as through circularization of pamphlets written in popular style. The radio, particularly at this

time, is a powerful medium for public education, and the Society is producing two electrically transcribed programs for use on local broadcasting stations throughout the United States in 1943.

Exhibits were provided to nearly 100 communities last year; films were loaned on more than 100 occasions; the industrial talking slide film was sent to approximately 200 communities; and more than 300,000 publications were distributed by the Society.

Professional Education Services

The Society strives to point the way and to stimulate prevention of blindness workers to carry into their localities recommendations and advice. To this end, instruction of personnel working under other auspices has remained a part of the Society's program. Institutes for public health nursing supervisors have been continued, though on a somewhat decreased scale because of travel restriction. Preceding the American Public Health Association convention in St. Louis, an institute was given especially for health personnel, in which the Society was fortunate in enlisting the services of some of the local leaders.

Last summer, courses for sight-saving class teachers were offered at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York; Wayne University, Detroit; and George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, with sponsorship of the Society and service from the staff members.

In keeping with the general trend for utmost economy, the Society is discontinuing two of its professional bulletins, *The Sight-Saving Class Exchange* and *Medical Social Workers in Eye Services News*. Lack of the former publication will be somewhat compensated for by the fact that *The Journal of Exceptional Children* will carry some items which previously were published in the *Exchange;* and material formerly appearing in both of these bulletins will appear in somewhat abbreviated form in the Society's revived newsletter, the *Eye Health & Safety News*. During the latter half of 1942, there was a greater increase in new subscribers to *The Sight-Saving Review* than in any other comparable period; it has also continued to hold most of its original subscribers.

In Memoriam

The Society announces with sadness the loss of Dr. Edward Jackson, a member of the Board of Directors, and Dr. Luther C. Peter, a member of the Advisory Committee.

Summary of Finances

EXPENSES DURING 1942			
Office Maintenance		$23,327.82	
Salaries		85,607.25	
Accounting and Auditing		2,030.00	
Field Service		5,752.07	
Publications and Exhibits		17,100.52	
Distribution Costs		15,661.02	
Meetings and Courses		2,670.86	
Co-operative Projects		3,987.87	
Annuities and Insurance		8,501.04	
Vision Testing Charts		2,007.35	
Films—"The Eyes Have It"		1,233.57	
Total Expenses, 1942			$167,879.37
INCOME DURING 1942			
Donations			
New	$19,275.86		
Renewal	81,947.02	$101,222.88	
Memberships			
New	987.50		
Renewal	15,576.60	16,564.10	
From Endowment and Reserve Funds		13,627.40	
From Wendel Foundation		7,575.00	
From Trust Funds (not administered by the Society)		2,592.47	
From Sale of Films, *Sight-Saving Review*, other publications and honoraria		7,942.20	
Total Income, 1942			149,524.05
Excess of Expenses over Income, 1942			$18,355.32
Total resources at December 31, 1941, including mortgages, securities and real estate at book value			$448,934.44
Withdrawn from the Reserve Fund to meet Excess of Expenses over Income during 1942			18,355.32
			$430,579.12
Net Additions to Endowment, Reserve and Special and Designated Funds during 1942, from legacies, special gifts, etc.			836.46
Total resources at December 31, 1942, including mortgages, securities and real estate at book value			$431,415.58*

* This does not include the following: Trust Funds not administered by the Society, aggregating $70,000.00; 1/40th share in the unliquidated properties of the Wendel Foundation; ⅛th share in the unliquidated and undistributed assets of the Mary L. C. Earle Estate (consisting principally of country real estate of uncertain value); and the Society's interest in various estates in course of administration.

The foregoing statement is based on the report of Frederick Fischer, Jr., C.P.A., by whom the accounts of the Society were audited. A copy of the report will be sent to anyone requesting it.

The Executive Director is required by the Board of Directors to submit a detailed statement of proposed expenditures and to account for all sums spent in accordance with budget appropriations. Vouchers are on file for every expenditure.

The record of finances for the year 1942 is especially encouraging as regards the number of individuals making voluntary contributions towards the work of the Society. More than twenty-three thousand members and donors sent gifts aggregating $117,786.98, representing an increase over the previous year of 9% in money and 9.5% in number of contributors. A broadening base of support not only means greater financial stability, but growing appreciation of the value of activities which safeguard sight.

In accordance with its policy of previous years, the Board of Directors approved the use of part of the Reserve Fund for current expenditures. Altogether $18,355.32 was withdrawn from the Reserve Fund, which was offset by net additions through legacies and special gifts of $836.46. The Society's total resources at book value on December 31, 1942, were reduced $17,518.86 as compared with the resources at December 31, 1941.

While receipts in 1942 on account of legacies were small, the Society was notified of several new legacies which will be paid in due course.

Form of Bequest

I give and bequeath to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation created under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of.....
.....Dollars
for its corporate purposes.

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.

1790 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

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